



ELECTION FOCUS 2008



October 17, 2008

No. 17

*** 17 Days until Election Day (Nov. 4) ***

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Latest News

[Road to the White House: John McCain](#)

[Road to the White House: Barack Obama](#)

In the days remaining until Election Day, both candidates are campaigning across the country, especially eager to win support from voters in key battleground states. Here is a summary of their recent campaign activities (September 27 – October 16)

[Final McCain-Obama Debate Most Contentious of the Three](#) – 10/16/2008

Candidates describe how their proposals would affect “Joe the plumber”

In their final and most contentious debate October 15, the presidential candidates made direct appeals to American voters. Illinois Senator Barack Obama and Arizona Senator John McCain frequently criticized each other in the debate at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. The debate dealt with not only domestic policy issues — the night's designated topic — but also personal character.



The candidates participate in their final debate October 15.

[Presidential Nominees' Body Language Sends Nonverbal Message](#)

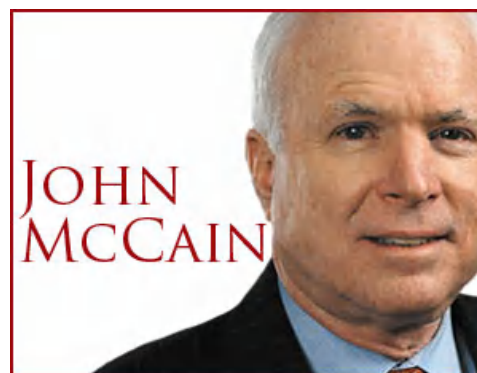
(10-15-2008)

Effectiveness of Obama's and McCain's debate presentations analyzed

The body language seen in the 2008 presidential debates between Democratic nominee Barack Obama and Republican John McCain is very important in conveying nonverbal messages to voters, communication experts tell America.gov. Roger Axtell, author of *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language Around the World*, said he believes McCain did not look at Obama during the first presidential debate on September 26 because he was “trying to stay focused with his audience.”



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[If elected: He would work to improve the U.S. education system.](#)

[The latest: Obama says he would lower taxes for 98 percent of small business owners.](#)

[If elected: He would lower health care costs for small business owners.](#)

[The latest: McCain says he would eliminate taxes on unemployment benefits.](#)

Daily updated information is available at a special **U.S. Elections** page at:
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Blogs at America.gov CAMPAIGN TRAIL TALK



<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/>

Provides running commentary and information on the 2008 elections in the United States. This blog keeps readers up to date on news, rumors and political chatter surrounding thousands of political races. Readers may ask questions about the electoral process, post their comments about the candidates, and generally guide the discussion.

Michelle Austein keeps you up to date on the candidates, issues and quirky happenings in the 2008 campaign, the third national election cycle she's covered. [Full Biography](#)

From the blog:

[Candidates unveil new economic proposals](#) — 15 October 2008

[Obama using old and new media advertising methods](#) — 15 October 2008

[Economy dominating many local campaigns](#) — 10 October 2008

POLLS

POST-DEBATE POLLS

National Polls Show Obama Holding 3 To 8 Point Lead

Sen. Barack Obama continues to lead Sen. John McCain in all national polls, though the margin of his lead varies significantly. The Diageo/Hotline daily presidential tracking poll of 823 likely voters taken October 12-14 shows Obama leading McCain **49%-41%**.

The George Washington University / [Battleground](#) tracking poll of 1,000 likely voters taken October 8-9 and 12-14 shows Obama leading McCain **51%-43%**.

The [Gallup](#) daily presidential tracking poll of 2,785 registered voters taken October 12-14 shows Obama leading McCain **50%-43%** among registered voters. Gallup also has two likely voter models – one (based on past voting behavior and current intention to vote) shows Obama leading McCain **49%-46%**, while the second (based on current intention to vote) shows Obama up **52%-44%**.

A [Pew Research](#) poll of 1,278 registered voters taken October 9-12 shows Obama leading McCain **50%-40%** among registered voters and **49%-42%** among likely voters.

The [Rasmussen Reports](#) automated daily presidential tracking poll for October 15 shows Obama leading McCain **50%-45%**, the same as the previous two days.

The C-Span/[Zogby](#) daily presidential tracking poll of 1,208 likely voters taken October 12-15 shows Obama leading McCain by **49%-44%**.

The [Investor's Business Daily](#) /TIPP tracking poll of 872 likely voters taken October 9-14 shows Obama leading McCain **45%-42%**.

If Kids Could Vote, Half Would Support Obama: [Harris Interactive](#) - Half (50%) of American youth ages 8-17 would vote for Barack Obama, the Democratic candidate, while three in ten (29%) would support John McCain, the Republican candidate.

Electoral College Update: Electoral College: Obama 260 McCain 163

CAMPAIGN 2008



[THE CANDIDATES AND THE WORLD - Last U.S. Presidential Debate.](#)

Council on Foreign Relations, October 16, 2008

U.S. presidential candidates Sens. Barack Obama (D-IL) and John McCain (R-AZ) held their final pre-election debate last night. The debate was dominated by the economy and domestic issues with the candidates again highlighting differences on trade and energy policy. Here is a recap of what was said on issues relating to foreign policy.

[What Are the Presidential Candidates Not Talking About?—](#) Brookings Institution, October 14, 2008.

Throughout the 2008 presidential campaign voters have heard the candidates' differences – and similarities – on health care plans, economic ideas and strategies to deal with Russia and Iraq. But what are they not talking about? Michael O'Hanlon, director of the Opportunity 08 project, led a panel of experts in a discussion about some of the important issues that the presidential candidates haven't addressed in their debates, campaign commercials or speeches.

[A Critique of the National Popular Vote](#) – CATO Institute, October 13, 2008 The National Popular Vote plan (NPV) eliminates states as electoral districts in presidential elections by creating a national electoral district for the presidential election,...[however] it brings about this change without amending the Constitution, thereby undermining the legitimacy of presidential elections.

[The Bradley Effect - Selective Memory](#) - Real Clear Politics, October 13, 2008

Now that polls indicate Senator Barack Obama is the favorite to win, some analysts predict a racially biased "Bradley Effect" could prevent Obama from winning a majority on November 4th

[Blaming the Messenger: A Continuum of Press Condemnation](#) - Pew Research Center, Oct. 10, 2008

As election day draws closer, complaints about a liberal bias in the press have intensified... Where do the current criticisms fit in with the history of national political leaders' relations with the press?

[Will the Culture War Matter on Election Day?](#) - Pew Research Center, Oct. 10, 2008 It has appeared that moral values issues would play only a small role in the November election...Just a few weeks before Election Day, the Pew Forum invited two culture war experts and a group of leading journalists to explore these questions in depth.

[Presidential Succession: Perspectives, Contemporary Analysis, and 110th Congress Proposed](#)

[Legislation](#) – Congressional Research Service Report, October 3, 2008 Subsequent to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, a range of legislation relating to presidential succession has been introduced. To date, the change has been incremental...

ARTICLE ALERT

THE NEXT PRESIDENT. By Richard Holbrooke. *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2008, Vol 87, No. 5

The next president will inherit leadership of a nation that is still the most powerful in the world -- a nation rich with the continued promise of its dynamic and increasingly diverse population, a nation that could, and must, again inspire, mobilize, and lead the world. At the same time, the next president will inherit a more difficult opening-day set of international problems than any of his predecessors have since at least the end of World War II. [FULL TEXT](#)

NEXT PRESIDENT CONFRONTS STAGGERING TO-DO LIST.

By Susan Page, *USA TODAY*, October 16, 2008

Why exactly would anybody want this job? The candidate who wins the White House on Nov. 4 will face the most calamitous economy for any new president since Franklin Roosevelt took over amid the Depression in 1933. He'll assume command of the biggest wartime deployment of U.S. troops since Richard Nixon was sworn in during the Vietnam War in 1969. [FULL TEXT](#)

THE CANDIDATES' TEMPERAMENTS: WHO'S A BETTER FIT FOR THE JOB? By Nancy Gibbs, *Time*, October 15, 2008.

Of all the false intimacies of modern life, the promise of a presidential campaign may be the most misleading. We think we know these men well enough to judge them. They come into our living rooms every night, plying us with insight and confession; we know the prayers they say and the beer they drink, their tics, their tastes, their talismans. But both John McCain and Barack Obama insist that there are things a campaign can't tell you about the temperament of an aspiring President. [FULL TEXT](#)

FOR REPUBLICANS, A GRIM NOVEMBER BECKONS. Signs Point To A Second Straight Blowout At The Polls. By Charlie Cook, *National Journal*, October 14, 2008

....a major international event would be required to shift the public focus toward foreign policy, McCain's strong suit, and away from the economy, his weak spot. It would be premature to say this is over, but the incline just seems to get steeper every day for the Arizonan. [FULL TEXT](#)

RENEWING AMERICAN LEADERSHIP. By Barack Obama. *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2008, Vol 86, No. 4

After Iraq, we may be tempted to turn inward. That would be a mistake. The American moment is not over, but it must be seized anew. We must bring the war to a responsible end and then renew our leadership -- military, diplomatic, moral -- to confront new threats and capitalize on new opportunities. America cannot meet this century's challenges alone; the world cannot meet them without America. [FULL TEXT](#)

Editorials:

[Barack Obama for President](#) - Washington Post, October 17, 2008; Page A24

[Who's Playing the Race Card?](#) - Charles Krauthammer, Washington Post, October 17, 2008; Page A25

[We still don't know what Palin stands for](#) - Peggy Noonan, WSJ, October 17, 2008

[Obama could be great, but dull](#) - David Brooks, NY Times, October 17, 2008

[The Best Debate By Far](#) - The Economist. October 16 2008

[Joe the Plumber Cuts to Heart of the Presidential Choice](#) - Wall Street Journal, October 16. 2008

Plus - [Google News](#) as well as [Yahoo News](#) on **Elections** updated continuously

ELECTION CALENDAR

[November 4, 2008](#) - Election Day

UPCOMING EVENTS



[America.gov](#) will provide detailed Election Day coverage and interactive activities on its U.S. Elections Web page:

<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/index.html>

America.gov will hold a "rolling webchat" which would allow participants to pose questions and view answers throughout Election Day. In conjunction with the Foreign Press Center, America.gov will webcast briefings with political experts throughout the afternoon and evening of Election Day. Speakers will provide analysis of poll results and look forward to what will happen following Election Day. Exact lineup to be announced closer to Election Day.

Date: November 4 until November 5, 2008. *Details including the hours of the webchat and speakers to answer questions will be announced shortly.*

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